



Wednesday Prayer

12th Sunday after Pentecost – Safe Harbors

I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.

This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord, and was saved from every trouble.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

Psalm 34:4-8

Where do you seek safe harbor? I was fortunate to spend a few nights up in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area this week with five others. On our way, we passed harbors in Duluth, Two Harbors, Silver Bay, Tofte and Grand Marais. Each of these cities has safe harbors for boaters along the rugged coastline of Lake Superior. Sudden changes in weather can bring on a dangerous tempest. The safe harbor provides refuge.

One of the conversations in our small group – while in the pristine beauty of the BWCA – sadly turned from easy-going to divisive in an instant. Like a sudden change of weather threatening my safety. I chose to find a safe harbor for myself while this passed. I found a rock overlooking the bay and engaged in the devotional booklet I had brought. As in Psalm 34, “this poor soul cried”, shedding tears for the ways we struggle to come together. And thankfully, that little storm passed as quickly as it had come up and we came back together.

When it comes to our work with Cherish All Children, I appreciate the terminology of Safe Harbor used to communicate that young people who have been exploited or trafficked are directed to supportive services, shelter, and housing. They are provided refuge rather than criminalized. [Safe Harbor laws](#) communicate that youth be treated with respect and dignity, with no judgement, no shame. So many young people don't know about the Safe Harbor laws, about the protection they can seek to get away from dangerous situations and people. Part of our work can be about educating our communities, using the tools provided, such as the [Safe Harbor Youth Outreach materials](#) provided by the MN Department of Health. Reach out for more information for your church or community group to help create awareness, and ultimately to motivate youth to reach out for help when ready.

God our protector, we pray that all who are working directly with youth who have experienced exploitation or trafficking reflect the radiance of your grace as they provide refuge. We pray that our churches and communities serve as safe harbors, and that our work will bring more young people into safety, honoring and respecting their journeys. We thank you for the safe harbor you offer each one of us in our times of need. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.